



Tuesday, April 10, 2018 3:00 p.m.
House Committee Room, Pocahontas Building
Meeting Summary

The Joint Commission on Technology and Science (JCOTS) held its first meeting of the 2018 interim on Tuesday, April 10, in Richmond. Senator Cosgrove, vice-chairman of JCOTS, called the meeting to order.

Senator Cosgrove opened the floor to nominations for chairman of JCOTS. Delegate Glenn Davis nominated Senator Cosgrove. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved. Delegate Kathy Byron nominated Delegate Davis to serve as vice-chair. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Chairman Cosgrove began the meeting by proposing that JCOTS not meet solely in Richmond for the 2018 interim but instead move to various locations around the Commonwealth. He stated that this would promote equitable travel for JCOTS members and other interested parties and that it would afford members the opportunity to learn about ongoing technological and scientific developments in other areas of the Commonwealth. This idea gained general consensus among the members. Delegate Plum added that JCOTS held meetings in locations outside of Richmond frequently in the early days of the committee. Chairman Cosgrove suggested that Virginia Tech and the NASA Langley Research Center would be appropriate locations and asked that staff poll members to determine which locations would be most suitable and find appropriate times for these meetings.

Staff then began a discussion of the proposed topics for the 2018 interim. Because of the low volume of study requests from the 2018 Session of the General Assembly, staff requested that members suggest topics for study pursuant to § 30-85 of the Code of Virginia. Possible topics mentioned included (i) unmanned aerial vehicle projects to follow along with the aviation and aerospace work JCOTS conducted in 2016–2017, suggested by Chairman Cosgrove; (ii) a prohibition on electronic devices that can view pornographic material when such devices do not have the ability to block such content from view, suggested by Delegate LaRock; (iii) a study of how to ethically exchange data between government agencies, suggested by Senator Dunnavant; and (iv) a study of the productivity and efficiency effects of teleworking in the Commonwealth, suggested by Delegate LaRock. Vice-chairman Davis also stated that the Chair of the House Committee on Rules requested that JCOTS conduct further study on HJ 153 (Davis), which would have studied the potential use of blockchain technology in government agencies. Lastly, Chairman Cosgrove suggested that biotechnology is a growing and interesting field. He asked if Senator Dunnavant, as a medical doctor, would be willing to take the lead on such a study if JCOTS were to take up the topic. Senator Dunnavant gladly accepted and expressed interest in the topic. Staff committed to working with the chair to distill the proposed ideas into study topics and create a schedule for the 2018 interim based on the topics JCOTS takes up.



During the public comment period, Bob Matthias from the City of Virginia Beach addressed the committee about a number of topics related to the city. He mentioned that Hampton Roads is currently welcoming a new \$65 million facility to house servers that mine cryptocurrency. The new facility even allows individuals to purchase their own servers. On a related point, Mr. Matthias mentioned that these "server farms" look for areas that can provide high amounts of renewable energy when considering development locations. He also mentioned a new electromechanical energy storage facility in the area. Mr. Matthias also discussed the recently installed transatlantic cable that connects Virginia Beach to Bilbao, Spain. The cable has 1.5 times the capacity of the entire Eastern Seaboard, and many more cables are already planned or under construction.

Following the public comment period, the meeting was adjourned.

